

The Hot Fight at Franklin

A FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY WAR STORY

November 30, 1864

TWO features of the battle fought at Franklin, Tenn., Nov. 30, 1864, placed it among the brilliant and bloody contests of the time—namely, the fiery charge of General Patrick Cleburne's Confederate division and the fierce countercharge of General Emerson Opydyke's Federal brigade—and there was something unusual on foot acting as spurs to martial valor. The Confederate General J. B. Hood had entered upon the march from Columbia toward Nashville in hopes of surprising the defenders of middle Tennessee, and General J. M. Schofield, with an inferior force of Federals placed across the Confederate front, had impeded the march. Only the day before Hood had almost surrounded Schofield at Spring Hill, but owing, as he asserted, to the slowness of his subordinate generals in attack-

With a yell, Cleburne's men rushed into the works, and when the defenders, after a brave but useless resistance, broke for the rear they followed at their heels, shooting down and capturing hundreds and crying out to one another, "Go into the works and take them!" More like wild men than soldiers, Cleburne's excited followers dashed over the half mile that lay between the captured outer line and the stronghold on the pike. The astonished defenders of the second line dared not fire upon the assailants for fear of hitting comrades who were either leading Cleburne's men or mingling with them in their mad race. Once at the rear works the onset of Cleburne's men was so impetuous that the soldiers on the parapet were literally run over, and in a few minutes, or before the reserves in the third line comprehended



"FALL IN! CHARGE BAYONETS! DOUBLE QUICK!"

ing the enemy had slipped out of the trap in the night and by a forced march reached Franklin, on the south bank of the Harpeth river.

At Franklin Schofield halted his columns on the southern border of the town, where a line of slight intrenchments was hastily constructed, and the weary soldiers lay down on their arms to enjoy a brief rest while the long army trains were crossing to a safer position north of the stream. The troops of Schofield's Twenty-third corps, commanded by General J. D. Cox, occupied the main line of works, which extended across the Columbia and Nashville pike, along which Hood was marching in active pursuit.

The extremities of the works rested on the river bank above and below the town, and the only break in the line was at the point where the pike ran through. There a gap had been left in order to accommodate the trains and artillery as well as the brigades bringing up the rear. These latter, three in number, belonged to General D. M. Stanley's Twenty-fourth corps and constituted Wagner's division. Stanley crossed to the north bank of the Harpeth with Wood's division of his corps, leaving Wagner to handle the rear guard. Of the three brigades in Wagner's division two, Conrad's and Lane's, were halted by General Cox's order on a knoll half a mile in front of the general line and covering the gap in the works at the pike. Wagner's Third brigade, led by General Emerson Opydyke, fled through the gap into the works at Franklin, and the men rested in reserve behind Cox's own division, close to the pike.

When the Confederate lines were forming for the attack Cleburne's division held the right and rested on the pike confronted by the Federal works and troops already described. Hood stated to his subordinates that he desired that the enemy be driven into the Harpeth river at all hazards, and, anticipating hot work, Cleburne asked permission to form his division into three lines of one brigade each. Hood granted the request, although General Stewart's corps of his army had not come up and his line was shorter than he desired.

Cleburne's division advanced along the Columbia pike, which bisected the Union line near the center, the most hazardous point to attack, the works being the heaviest and the best manned with troops and cannon. There were thirty-eight Union guns in the works and in reserve in or near the pike in the center. The first opposition to Cleburne's assault was made by the brigades of Lane and Conrad of Wagner's division. These troops had strengthened their position on the knoll by constructing slight breastworks. The only signal to warn them of the attack was the sudden bursting into view of a long line of Confederates moving rapidly in perfect order, with banners waving and bayonets glistening in the bright rays of the setting sun.

the crisis, Cleburne's banners waved over them, his men occupied a breach the width of a regiment and, intoxicated with triumph, were dashing ahead along the pike to pounce upon the reserves.

Meanwhile Opydyke's soldiers, unmindful of the affairs at the extreme front, had been taking the breathing spell richly earned by serving as rear guard on the march that day. Opydyke had no orders except to rest his troops. The soldiers were getting ready their suppers or munching raw rations when the breastworks they had just marched past were carried by a lightning rush of the Confederates, who then were at their heels. The men instinctively threw down their handfuls of bread and pork and took up their weapons.

The moment the men in gray were seen swarming and shooting on the line where they had no business to be Opydyke's commands rang out as calmly and clear cut as though he had rehearsed them, though surely no such combination of orders had ever been called for theretofore. "First brigade, fall in! Charge bayonets! Double quick!" were the words. Then for an hour in that narrow space raged the hottest open field and breastworks struggle of the war.

The Confederates on the right and left of Cleburne's column, catching up the advantage gained by his thundering blows, joined in the assault to drive the wedge home. Stewart's belated corps, having come up after Cleburne formed his line, found the space too narrow between the pike and river to accommodate its brigades, and these surged to the left, following in Cleburne's footsteps and fighting over the same ground. Federal officers in the works along the pike counted thirteen separate and distinct Confederate assaults on their front. Five Confederate generals, including Cleburne, were killed and eight severely wounded in close contact with the Union works.

But not generals alone bore off the honors for valor on the field of Franklin. Soldiers vied with their leaders in reckless exposure of their lives. Often rival flags floated side by side on the same parapet, and their bearers or defenders fought around them with clubbed rifles and with bayonets used as rapiers. The Seventy-second Illinois regiment of Wagner's division was nearly wiped out, every field officer, its color guard, consisting of a sergeant and eight corporals, and 150 men being shot down. The Forty-fourth Missouri (Federal), lying next to the gap where the first break occurred, changed front under fire and maintained its ground, with a loss of thirty-four killed and thirty-seven wounded. The carnage on the Confederate side was still more terrible. Schofield held his ground and at night crossed the river unmolested by Hood's shattered army. **GEORGE L. KILMER.**

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CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL.

Only One English King, Henry IV, Has Been Entombed There.

The ancient cathedral at Canterbury shelters the remains of only one English king, Henry IV. That this particular monarch should have been entombed there is the more remarkable since he breathed his last in the Jerusalem chamber of Westminster abbey, and it might naturally have been supposed in the circumstances that he would have been laid to rest in the abbey, where so many other of England's kings sleep their last sleep. It seems, however, that Henry before his death gave orders that he was to be buried in the cathedral at Canterbury opposite the tomb of his uncle, Edward, the Black Prince.

For hundreds of years a story was current that on the way down the river a hurricane arose and that the people on board the vessel, convinced that the storm was caused by the fact that a king's body was on board, cast the corpse into the water in the dead of night and, filling the coffin with rubbish, brought it with all pomp and circumstance to the cathedral. Some years ago the dean and chapter resolved to get at the truth of the story.

So they opened the royal tomb and the king's lead coffin. For one brief moment dean and chapter gazed upon the kingly lineaments of that monarch whom Shakespeare describes as "sky aspiring Bolingbroke." Only for a moment, however, as the body crumbled to dust almost at once. But Canterbury now knows beyond all doubt that an English king rests within its walls.

DID HIS BEST.

He Brought the Only Cant Hook That He Could Find.

If the report of the Fulton Gazette is true a Missouri farmer, accompanied by several of his hired men, went into the woods one morning in the fall of the year to cut down some trees. When about to begin work it was discovered that the cant hook had been left behind. Turning to one of the men, an Irishman not very long over, the farmer instructed him to drive back to the barn for the missing tool. The Irishman did not know what a cant hook looked like, but was averse to exposing his ignorance, so drove off on his errand, trusting to find some one at the farm who would enlighten him.

At the barn, however, there was no one to help him out of his dilemma. Casting his eyes about the place for the thing that would be most likely to bear the name of "cant hook," he saw a mulley cow with never a sign of a horn upon its head and concluded it was what he had been sent for.

Procuring a rope he fastened the cow to the rear end of his vehicle and exultingly drove back to the woods. "What the Sam Hill have you got there?" shouted the farmer on seeing his messenger and the cow. "I sent you for the cant hook to use in moving the logs. What have you brought that cow for?"

"Be jabers, boss, divil another thing could I see around the barn that can't hook but this."

The Return.

"Ob, Clarence, darling, so you are home at last!"

"Yes, my precious wife. And how deliciously sweet it is to be here!"

"What aches it has been?"

"Yes, dearest, hasn't it? I thought the time would never pass!"

"I thought so, too, darling, Clarence. I don't believe you've changed a mile since you went away. It is marvelous!"

"And you, dear one, look quite as familiar as ever. I declare I should have recognized you anywhere."

"And the house—does it look familiar too?"

"I declare it does, though it seems a long, long dream since I saw it last."

"Clarence?"

"Ethel!"

Cataclysm.

Then this young pair spent the rest of the evening renewing acquaintance with everything, for it was the first day he had gone back to the office after the wedding trip.—Virginia Niles Leeds in Life.

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